

VZCZCXRO8087
OO RUEHDE RUEHDIR
DE RUEHMS #0042 0151417
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 151417Z JAN 07
FM AMEMBASSY MUSCAT
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7658
INFO RUEHZM/GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE
RUEHAM/AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE 0444
RUEHLB/AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE 0077
RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE 1045
RUEHDM/AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE 0076

C O N F I D E N T I A L MUSCAT 000042

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

CAIRO/RIYADH PASS TO S PARTY

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/15/2017

TAGS: [PREL](#) [EAID](#) [LE](#) [MU](#)

SUBJECT: LEBANESE PM SINIORA IN MUSCAT: REQUESTS ADDITIONAL
AID

REF: A. STATE 03663

[1](#)B. MUSCAT 00036

[1](#)C. 06 MUSCAT 01734

Classified By: Ambassador Gary A. Grappo for Reasons 1.4 (b, d)

[1](#)1. (C) In a January 15 meeting with Minister Responsible for Foreign Affairs Yousef bin Alawi to discuss U.S. policy on Iraq (septel), Ambassador inquired about the visit of Lebanese PM Siniora the previous day (January 14) to Muscat. Bin Alawi replied that Siniora's meeting with Sultan Qaboos had gone "very well," and that the two leaders had talked for more than two hours about "everything," including Siniora's efforts to talk with the Lebanese opposition. Bin Alawi continued that the Sultan was "all in favor" of supporting the Lebanese government, and Siniora personally. According to bin Alawi, the Sultan did not offer specific advice for Siniora as he believed the Lebanese PM was generally pursuing the right course of action. Bin Alawi further shared that Siniora asked about Omani relations with Iran, but did not directly request Oman to intercede with Tehran on his behalf. Similarly, Siniora did not ask Oman to attempt to mediate with Syria. (Comment: Bin Alawi noted that such a request would have been pointless "since we have no leverage with the Syrians." End Comment.)

[1](#)2. (C) Bin Alawi told Ambassador that Oman was fully aware that Iran, and especially Syria, backed Lebanese opposition attempts to topple Siniora's government. To permanently resolve the current impasse in Beirut, bin Alawi commented, someone must "broker a deal" with Damascus. Such an agreement, he asserted, could also help bring Syria "back into the Arab camp," strengthen Syrian efforts to stem the flow of foreign fighters into Iraq, and reduce Iran's influence in Damascus. The big question, bin Alawi posed, was who could negotiate with the Syrians? He noted that it would also be very difficult to overcome the huge lack of trust between the Lebanese factions. As an illustration, Bin Alawi remarked that Arab League head Amre Moussa had told him that Lebanese leaders from different groups seated at the same table would "not even look at each other."

[1](#)3. (C) Asked about the upcoming Lebanese donors' conference (ref A), bin Alawi said that he did not plan on leading the Omani delegation in Paris. Unless Minister of National Economy Ahmed Macki chose to travel to France, Oman would likely be represented at the Secretary-General level. Bin Alawi added, however, that the Omani government would "probably" deposit USD 10 million in the Lebanese Central Bank - in addition to the USD 50 million it had already deposited in Beirut (ref C) - in response to a request by

Siniora for more Omani reconstruction assistance. Bin Alawi stated that Oman would work with the Lebanese government to decide how to use Oman's USD 60 million "donation" to fund specific development projects.

GRAPPO